4 Agents on Socialist Case Are Acknowledged by CIA

By Stephen Green
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A CIA spokesman said yesterday it "can be assumed" that agents designated R-4, R-5, R-6 and R-7 were working for the intelligence agency when they gathered information about the Young Socialists Alliance here in 1969 and 1970.

The spokesman also said that some information about the Alliance and its parent Socialist Workers Party was obtained casually by CIA employs in the course of doing other business.

Other material about the party may have been sent to the CIA by persons not connected with the agency and then was put into CIAfiles, the spokesman added.

Documents showing that the intelligence agency obtained information about the Socialist Workers Party as early as 1951 were released Wednesday by the party.

The party obtained the documents from the CIA as the result of a court order in a suit seeking to stop the CIA, FBI and other government agencies from spying on it. The civil suit was brought in New York City by the Political Rights Defense Fund.

In addition to showing the CIA kept literature about the party, the documents also show the agency got information about party meetings here in 1969 and 1970 from four agents identified only as R-4, R-5, R-6 and R-7.

The Young Socialists Alliance is the youth organization of the Socialist Workers Party which espouses the world revolution philosophy of the late Leon Trotsky.

The Rockefeller Commission report on the CIA said the agency violated its charter by spying on domestic organizations. It specifically cited Operation CHAOS, a CIA operation to spy on antiwar and black activist groups around the country between 1967 and 1973.

It also said that in 1967 and 1968 the CIA's Office of Security infiltrated and spied on activist organizations in Washington but in December of 1968 that operation was turned over to D.C. Police.

President Ford created the Rockefeller Commission to investigate the CIA after press reports that the agency engaged in massive, illegal domestic spying.

The only mention by the commission of CIA domestic spying in Washington after 1968 was an occassion in 1971 when a CHAOS agent was assigned to infiltrate the May Day antiwar organization.

The CIA spokesman said yesterday that the agents identified only as R-4, R-5, R-6 and R-7 may have worked for the CHAOS project. He said it also was possible that the four agents spying on the Young Socialists Alliance here may have been "overzealous."

On Wednesday, the CIA spokesman said R-4, R-5, R-6 and R-7 may or may not have been CIA agents. Yesterday, he said: "It can be assumed" they were working for the CIA." Their reports were filed with the CIA Office of Security, according to the documents.

The documents include copies of memorandums dated 1959 and 1961, respectively, from New York and Boston "field" offices. The 1959 memo deals with YSA literature obtained from Columbia University. The 1961 memo discusses literature obtained at a YSA demonstration near Harvard University.

The CIA spokesman said the memos were written from the agency's New York and Boston offices to CIA headquarters.

According to the spokesman, the material was gathered in a "passive way." He said the CIA had not then "targeted" the YSA for surveillance. "It was overt, not covert," the spokesman said.

He expalined that "some of our fellows probably were passing through Harvard Yard on other business and picked it (the literature) up and sent it to us."

According to the spokesman, the CIA maintained a file on the Socialists Workers Party as early as 1951 because the organization was listed as "subversive" by the Justice Department and that in doing background checks on potential CIA employees, the agency would want to check the possibility of any link between potential employees and the party.

The documents also show the CIA kept in its files a copy of the 1968 New York state elections ballot containing the names of Socialist Workers Party candidates.

The CIA spokesman said that persons not employed by the agency often sent it unsolicited material. "There is a nut fringe that sends us stuff. What do we do with it? We pop it in the files," he said.